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Shawn Miller

Staff members enjoy lunch on a sunny day outside the Madison Building on April 14.

## Colleagues Meet Again After a Tough Two Years

Employees reflect on the road to operations restoration with hope for the future.

**BY WENDI A. MALONEY**

On June 22, 2020, Jonathan Miyashiro and Francisco Macías stepped inside a mostly empty Madison Building to work. It was the first time they'd done so since the Library closed in March to limit the spread of COVID-19. Library administrators had announced a multiphase plan to restore on-site operations a few weeks earlier, and Miyashiro and Macías were two of about 200 staff members to come back in the first phase to carry out tasks that could be done only on-site.

Both found the Library a little eerie. "The calendars you passed pinned up by people's empty desks were still on March 2020," Miyashiro said.

Recalled Macías: "We brought lunches and ate them in hermetic spaces, away from everyone to ensure we didn't give or bring upon ourselves this mostly invisible plague."

But, gradually, as the plan unfolded over the ensuing 22 months, more staffers returned, more work resumed, reading rooms opened and public exhibitions were unshuttered. A handful of socially distanced events even took place. The reopening culminated last week, when all Library employees were required to report on-site.

But not everyone's paths crossed during the week, nor will they necessarily under what's being called the new normal. Many staff

**OPERATIONS RESTORATION, CONTINUED ON 7**

## DONATED TIME

The following employees have satisfied eligibility requirements to receive leave donations from other staff members. Contact Amy McAllister at [amcallister@loc.gov](mailto:amcallister@loc.gov).

Kelly Abell  
Lynette Brown

Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard  
Avraham "Avi" Shapiro

## WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DAY EVENT

**April 26, 9:30 to 11 a.m.**  
Online

Join Register of Copyrights Shira Perlmutter and other presenters in a discussion about copyright and intellectual property for young professionals. The event marks World Intellectual Property Day, observed on April 26 since 2000.

[Register in advance here](#). You will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Questions? Contact [amro@copyright.gov](mailto:amro@copyright.gov).

## BIKE TO WORK DAY 2022

**May 20**

Join thousands of area commuters for the annual event celebrating bicycling as a fun, low-cost, healthy and environmentally friendly way to get around. Pit stops around the Washington, D.C., area, will offer free food and beverages and other giveaways plus a chance to win raffle prizes. The first 15,000 to register and attend a pit stop by bike will receive a free T-shirt.

[Register at the Bike to Work Day website](#).

## DEVELOP CULTURAL COMPETENCE

**April 29, 10 to 11:30 a.m.**  
Online and On-site

The Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Programs is sponsoring an interactive hybrid book talk with Enrique J. Zaldivar, author of "Your Unique Cultural Lens: A Guide to Cultural Competence."

Find out how to use the unique cultural lens exercise described in the book to increase self-awareness and understand your own values, beliefs, strengths and limitations. The exercise will help you to cultivate curiosity, broaden your perspectives to be inclusive of employees and colleagues and work together effectively.

[Register here](#) to participate online or on-site in the Montpelier Room. The deadline to register for on-site participation is April 22.

Questions? Contact Sarah Kith at [skith@loc.gov](mailto:skith@loc.gov).

Request ADA accommodations five days in advance at (202) 707-6382 or [ADA@loc.gov](mailto:ADA@loc.gov).

# GAZETTE

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[loc.gov/staff/gazette](http://loc.gov/staff/gazette)

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**WENDI A. MALONEY**  
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**CONTRIBUTING EDITORS**  
Deanna McCray-James, calendar  
Kia Campbell, Moving On  
Amy McAllister, donated leave

**PROOFREADER**  
George Thuronyi

**DESIGN AND PRODUCTION**  
Ashley Jones

### MISSION OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library's central mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

### ABOUT THE GAZETTE

An official publication of the Library of Congress, The Gazette encourages Library managers and staff to submit articles and photographs of general interest. Submissions will be edited to convey the most necessary information.

Back issues of The Gazette in print are available in the Communications Office, LM 143. Electronic archived issues and a color PDF file of the current issue are available online at [loc.gov/staff/gazette](http://loc.gov/staff/gazette).

### GAZETTE WELCOMES LETTERS FROM STAFF

Staff members are invited to use the Gazette for lively and thoughtful debate relevant to Library issues. Letters must be signed by the author, whose place of work and telephone extension should be included so we can verify authorship. If a letter calls for management response, an explanation of a policy or actions or clarification of fact, we will ask for management response.—Ed.

**Library of Congress Gazette**  
Washington, DC 20540-1620

**Editorial:** Mark Hartsell, 7-9194, [mhartsell@loc.gov](mailto:mhartsell@loc.gov), or Wendi Maloney, 7-0979, [wmal@loc.gov](mailto:wmal@loc.gov)

**Design and production:** Ashley Jones, 7-9193, [gaze@loc.gov](mailto:gaze@loc.gov)  
ISSN 1049-8184

Printed by the Printing Management Section

### GAZETTE DEADLINES

The deadline for editorial copy for the May 6 Gazette is Wednesday, April 27.

Email editorial copy and letters to the editor to [mhartsell@loc.gov](mailto:mhartsell@loc.gov) and [wmal@loc.gov](mailto:wmal@loc.gov).

To promote events through the Library's online calendar ([www.loc.gov/loc/events](http://www.loc.gov/loc/events)) and the Gazette Calendar, email event and contact information to [calendar@loc.gov](mailto:calendar@loc.gov) by 9 a.m. Monday of the week of publication.

Boxed announcements should be submitted electronically (text files) by 9 a.m. Monday the week of publication to [mhartsell@loc.gov](mailto:mhartsell@loc.gov) and [wmal@loc.gov](mailto:wmal@loc.gov).



# Library Marks Frederick Law Olmsted Bicentennial

BY BARBARA BAIR

An Olmsted exhibit is now on view in the Great Hall.

This month, the Library is recognizing the April 26 bicentennial of the birth of writer, administrator and landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted (1822–1903), designer of the U.S. Capitol grounds and public parks and spaces around the country. Activities include an “Olmsted Bicentennial” exhibit in the Jefferson Building and a series of By the People Olmsted crowdsourcing transcription challenges for online volunteers.

The Manuscript Division holds both Olmsted’s personal papers and the records of Olmsted Associates. The landscape architecture firm based in Brookline, Massachusetts, was operated by Olmsted sons Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. (1870–1957) and John Charles Olmsted (1852–1920) with many talented associates. These collections are digitized and available online.

The “Olmsted Bicentennial” exhibit charts Olmsted’s life from his youth through modern reinterpretations of the public parks he designed. The five-case display is on view on both sides of the Great Hall through June 4. It features items from the Manuscript Division, the Prints and Photographs Division and the general collections in combination with reproductions of drawings and photographs from the National Park Service’s Olmsted Archives at the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site in Brookline.

In April up to the anniversary on the 26th, a weekly series of special “By Design: Frederick Law Olmsted and Associates” campaign challenges are also being mounted by the Library’s By the People crowdsourcing transcription program. These challenges, based on the subject file in the Olmsted papers manuscript col-



A crowd lunches under trees during a 1907 May Day party in Central Park.

lection, are giving volunteers living anywhere with an internet connection a chance to get up close and personal to Olmsted and projects of interest to them. The volunteers are transcribing select printed and handwritten materials from his papers or items from various geographical regions that were the focus of Olmsted’s many projects and proposals.

Olmsted gained experience growing up in the woodlands and landscapes of the Connecticut Valley and on trips in New England and New York, including to Niagara Falls and Lake George. He widened his observations through travels as a young man to England, Europe and China. As a journalist and travel writer in the fraught decade before the Civil War, he published observations of park and garden systems internationally and wrote of the economy and sociology of the slaveholding American South and Texas.

His breakthrough as an innovative planner of public parks came just before the war, when he partnered between 1857 and 1861 with architect Calvert Vaux to implement their award-winning design for Central Park in Manhattan. After the war began, Olmsted served as general secretary for the U.S. Sanitary Commission and helped devise a system of “floating hospital” ships to transport the ill and

wounded of the Union Army.

As a postwar planner, he proposed projects located in all regions of the country and parts of Canada, emerging as a foremost spokesperson for the public parks movement. He collaborated with others in designing a variety of public and private spaces from residential developments and resorts, private estates, cemeteries and memorials to parks, park systems, grounds of public buildings and hospitals and school and college campuses.

The Library joins the American Society of Landscape Architects, The Cultural Landscape Foundation, the National Association for Olmsted Parks, the National Park Service, local Olmsted park conservancies and many other institutions and organizations across the nation in recognizing the ongoing impact and history of Olmsted’s theories of public parks and two generations of Olmsted family landscape designs. ■

## HCD SERVICES PORTAL

In the Library’s new hybrid workplace, the [Human Capital Directorate \(HCD\) services portal](#) is there to help. Ask questions of HCD professionals; submit documents related to benefits, retirement and payroll matters; and track requests.

# Updated COVID Protocols Affect Unvaccinated Staff

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its community-level metrics on COVID-19 transmission last Thursday, moving the District of Columbia from the low transmission category to medium. Culpeper, Virginia, and the counties surrounding Washington, D.C., with the exception of Arlington, Virginia, remain in the low category. Arlington, like the District, moved to medium.

The Library uses this information to determine the correct level of preventive measures. Following the change in D.C. community-level transmission, the Library has reinstated the requirement for unvaccinated employees to complete weekly COVID-19 screening tests. The Health Services Division

is giving unvaccinated employees guidance on testing protocols and reporting requirements. This action aligns with the Safer Federal Workforce Taskforce policy applicable to executive branch agencies.

The change in status for D.C. was based on an increase in infections during the previous week. As expected, given the milder symptoms associated with current virus variants, hospital admissions and occupancy rates for COVID-19 patients remain low. In light of past fluctuations in infection rates, however, changes in local conditions are expected, and preventive measures will continue to be adjusted when needed and communicated promptly.

Although masks are not required

at the medium level of community transmission, employees, researchers and visitors are encouraged to wear masks if they choose to do so. Other required COVID-19 protocols and policies at the Library remain unchanged.

When a community shifts from a low to a medium level of community transmission, the CDC recommends that those at high risk for severe illness talk to their health care providers about the need to mask or take other precautions.

The CDC also recommends that those in communities with a low or medium level of community transmission stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines and get tested if they have symptoms. ■

## Mandatory IT Security Awareness Training

The Library's mandatory IT security awareness training course for 2022 is now available to all Library users. This training must be completed by Sept. 9.

All Library employees, contractors and volunteers with access to Library computers or other IT systems are required to take the course annually. It is designed to ensure that all Library IT users have a uniform understanding of security procedures and the ability to apply them in daily operations.

The course has been updated for 2022 and is available through LOC Learn. Note that parts of it are presented using audio narration. Be sure you have headphones or computer speakers to participate. Closed captioning is provided. In addition, for those who need it, [a text version](#) is available that can be used in conjunction with the online training to complete the mandatory requirement.

Follow these instructions to complete the course:

**1.** While connected to the Library network, go to the [2022 IT Security Training](#) page on

LOC Learn. Note: Use Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome as your browser. Do not use Mozilla Firefox or Internet Explorer.

**2.** If prompted, click the I Agree button, then click Continue to log in.

**3.** Click Register to register for the course. Your registration will be confirmed automatically using your LOC Learn log-in credentials.

**4.** Click Start Activity to begin the first of four training activities. Complete all four. To meet

the mandatory requirement, your completion status in the top information section of the course page must show 100 percent completion for the entire course.

If you need help accessing the course, contact [ocioservicedesk@loc.gov](mailto:ocioservicedesk@loc.gov) or (202) 707-7727.

For more information about mandatory IT security awareness training, visit the IT security webpage of the Office of the Chief Information Officer or contact [securitytraining@loc.gov](mailto:securitytraining@loc.gov). ■

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# Library Expands Access to Non-Latin Scripts

BY JESSALYN ZOOM

With the American Library Association (ALA), the Library of Congress maintains guidelines on standardized romanization to use in metadata cataloging records for content in non-Latin scripts – Arabic, Cyrillic, Chinese and Hebrew, for example. These guidelines are critical to ensuring wide access to unique resources at the Library and beyond.

Several years ago, however, the joint committees responsible for maintaining the guidelines went on hiatus after key staff retired. The ALA and the Library took advantage of this time to work behind the scenes to revise the procedures for proposing new or revised romanization standards. The result: Last spring, the Library's Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate (ABA) announced the resumption of the romanization program with [newly revised procedural guidelines](#).

"This initiative leverages language and subject experts from the Library and stakeholders in the global community," Beacher Wiggins, director of ABA, said. "The goal is to make non-Latin script material more discoverable through the creation of standardized metadata."

ABA's Asian and Middle Eastern Division (ASME) catalogs most of the Library's non-Latin script material, and it played a pivotal role in developing and implementing the new procedures to standardize romanization of non-Latin scripts. Formation of a Romanization Table Review Board to oversee review and approval of proposals is key to the revised procedures.

The board is made up of representatives from the Library and two ALA committees. Wiggins; Judith Cannan, chief of ABA's Policy, Training and Cooperative Programs Division; and myself as ASME's chief serve on behalf of the Library. ALA members on the board are current or former romanization

committee members from Princeton University; the University of California, Berkeley; the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA); and Brigham Young University.

Since adopting the new guidelines, the board has considered three romanization revision proposals affecting Macedonian, Armenian and Japanese scripts. For each proposal, a committee of linguistic and subject matter experts conducted a formal review process, then sought public comments. After considering the comments, the committee forwarded a final recommendation to the board.

The board voted to approve the Macedonian proposal in November 2021 and the Armenian proposal this past January. It is still reviewing the Japanese proposal.

Brigita Sebald of ASME worked on the Armenian proposal, an effort that unfolded over more than a year and serves as an example of how the process works.

In 2020, UCLA and OCLC, a global network bibliographic utility, collaborated to batch-add Armenian script to older catalog records in OCLC that contain only romanized text. When UCLA's Armenian cataloger, Nora Avetyan, was spot-checking the records, she noticed certain inconsistencies

when Armenian script was added.

So, she convened a group of Armenian catalogers to discuss these issues, and the group decided that making changes to the Armenian romanization standard might make the process of batch-adding script more consistent. The group reviewed existing standards and submitted a proposal to the Romanization Table Review Board in May 2021, following the new procedural guidelines.

The review committee approved the initial proposal, then invited comments from language and subject experts, receiving important suggestions about diacritics, numerals and punctuation. After careful deliberation, the review committee submitted final recommendations to the Romanization Table Review Board.

The board approved all of the recommended changes in January and announced the revised Armenian romanization standards through various professional email discussion groups.

"The new procedures have been well received in the library community," Wiggins said. Already, he added, the tables have led to increased access to important non-Latin script material. ■

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**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**  
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Elizabeth D. Leonard

## Elizabeth D. Leonard

*Civil War historian Elizabeth Leonard has written extensively about the role of women on the battlefield and the social and political reverberations of Abraham Lincoln's assassination. Her book "Lincoln's Forgotten Ally: Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt of Kentucky" won the Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize. She researched that book, her other works and her soon-to-be-published title, "Benjamin Franklin Butler: A Noisy, Fearless Life," in the Library's Manuscript Division.*

### **Tell us about your background and research interests.**

I am a native of New York City and received my Ph.D. in U.S. history from the University of California, Riverside, in 1992.

While pursuing my doctorate, I took a particular interest in a course on the American Civil War and was struck by the absence of women in any of our readings. The assumption seemed to be that women had been irrelevant to the war effort and had not been affected by the war itself in any

meaningful way. I was sure that these assumptions were false, and my desire to fill such a glaring gap in the literature led me to my dissertation topic, which became my first book, "Yankee Women: Gender Battles in the Civil War."

All of my subsequent research has been on the Civil War (or the Civil War era), though it has moved away from a focus on women specifically.

### **How do you select subjects?**

For an Americanist, the Civil War era is, of course, a topic of unending interest and importance. Having begun my career as a scholar of "Yankee women" who sustained the Union effort in various ways, I have generally been guided from project to project by one or more questions that remained unanswered at the time I put the previous project to bed.

In the course of my research on "Yankee Women," I began to wonder about the experiences of women from both sides who did go into battle on behalf of their respective causes and so were planted the seeds of my second book, "All the Daring of the Soldier: Women of the Civil War Armies."

While completing that book, I found myself questioning why so many of the "she-rebels" I encountered had avoided harsh punishment despite their often violent anti-Union behavior, while Mary Surratt had been tried, convicted and summarily executed

shortly after the war as one of John Wilkes Booth's co-conspirators in assassinating President Lincoln. One could argue that Surratt, whose involvement in the conspiracy was actually rather murky, bore the brunt of all the restraint exercised by the Union against she-rebels during the war. Researching her led me to the story of Joseph Holt – the prosecutor of the Lincoln assassination conspirators – and so on.

### **Why did you decide to delve into Butler's story?**

Anyone who studies the Civil War era in any depth eventually meets up with Benjamin Butler. A prominent lawyer and Democrat in Lowell, Massachusetts, before the war began, Butler volunteered for military service early and thus became Lincoln's senior "political" general, in which capacity he famously established the "contraband" policy that protected slavery's runaways from being returned to bondage.

After the war, Butler served for a decade in the U.S. House of Representatives – defending and advancing the rights of Black Americans, women and workers – and for a term as governor of Massachusetts.

Butler was also an alumnus of Waterville (now Colby) College in Maine, where I taught for nearly 30 years. Indeed, I consider him easily Colby's most important Civil War-era alumnus, though Elijah

## IT and Technology Questions?



Contact the

# OCIO SERVICE DESK

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Parish Lovejoy has traditionally gotten much more attention.

During my early years at Colby, when I still knew very little about Butler beyond the epithets that so commonly attached to his name, I envied neighboring Bowdoin College's association with the dashing and widely celebrated Joshua Chamberlain, who not only attended Bowdoin but also taught there before leaving to join the Union army.

Then, at a conference in the early 2000s, I confessed my Bowdoin envy to the great historian Gary Gallagher, who quite appropriately (and gently) chastised me for not digging deeper into Butler's war-time – and indeed life – story. I eventually decided to take Gary's advice, and here we are.

## **When did you first start using the Library's collections?**

I began doing research at the Library when I started work on my dissertation in 1989. I have published seven books since then, all of which have relied to a greater or lesser extent on the magnificent collections in the Library's Manuscript Division as well as the generous assistance of its congenial and deeply well-informed staff. I am grateful!

## **Do you have any advice for other researchers on navigating the Library's collections?**

Be focused. Do whatever planning you can do in advance (much information and many detailed finding aids are available online); come with a clear idea of the materials you hope to examine (but be prepared to experience both happy and frustrating surprises); and do not hesitate to avail yourself of the expertise of the gracious and generous archivists there who know the collections so well! ■

## **OPERATIONS RESTORATION, CONTINUED FROM 1**

members are eligible to telework between one and four days a week in the postpandemic workplace. Now, 67% of staff telework compared to 43% before the pandemic.

Miyashiro isn't one of them. Although his job as a supervisory library technician for the cataloging-in-publication (CIP) program is eligible for telework, he has chosen to be on-site five days a week, as his team processes books arriving to the Library. Macías, head of the Iberia and Rio Office Section of the African, Latin American and Western European Division, teleworks three times a week now.

Miyashiro said he liked the quiet and smaller crowds during operations restoration, and he will need to get used to the added bustle now. But his team – including two new hires – is busy processing a steady flow of incoming books and has even taken on a couple of new projects. So, he is optimistic.

"I'm back at my old desk, the March 2020 calendars are down and some of the books we handle now have COVID-19 subject headings," he said.

"Things have eased up," Macías said. "You see more people. And we don't look as scared as we did two years ago."

When the pair first returned on-site, in addition to regularly assigned duties, they supervised the distribution of backlogged mail meant for the Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate (ABA), which oversees both their divisions.

Between March and June 2020, incoming mail, much of it addressed to ABA, was rerouted to the Library's Cabin John, Maryland, warehouse and bundled into hundreds of pallets. Miyashiro and Macías tag-teamed management duties with Monique Graham and Hector Morey of ABA to clear the directorate's backlog.

"There was an attitude of everyone on-site in the early days of pitching in and getting this monu-

mental task done," Miyashiro said.

A little over a month after he and Macías returned on-site, the Library became marginally less lonely when another 500 staff members started coming on staggered schedules to resume other priority activities, such as processing physical collections and responding to congressional loan requests.

But the Library remained pretty quiet, even after phase two of operations restoration began on Aug. 24 and service units identified additional work requiring on-site access. Staff presence gradually increased, but those who could do most of their work remotely continued to do so.

Things went along on this basis for multiple months as virus variants emerged and Library administrators assessed the safety of bringing more staff on-site.

Then, in June 2021, with COVID-19 indicators improving, reading rooms opened to researchers. It was the first step toward resumption of on-site public services, and it ushered in a new sense of normality.

The Library's pandemic protocols, including masking and social distancing, applied in reading rooms, and researchers had to make appointments to visit to reduce COVID transmission. But these measures did little to dampen enthusiasm.

"We had people calling and writing in droves in the two weeks leading up to reopening," reference librarian Lara Szypszak of the Manuscript Division said.

On June 1, when the reading rooms of the Law Library and the Manuscript, Geography and Map and Serial and Government Publications divisions opened, 30 researchers visited. By the end of that week, 97 had.

By mid-July all but one of the Library's 20 reading rooms were open and serving researchers by appointment. The Science and Business Reading Room

## **OPERATIONS RESTORATION, CONTINUED ON 8**



## 22 FRIDAY

**Discussion:** “Ayiti Reimagined: A Conversation with Jean Casimir.” Join the Latin American, Caribbean and European Division for a panel conversation with Casimir and other scholars of Haiti on more than 150 years of Haitian history. 4 p.m., LJ 119. Contact: [susc@loc.gov](mailto:susc@loc.gov).

## 25 MONDAY

**Webinar:** In “Fragments, Discovery and Creating Knowledge,” Preservation Research and Testing Division staff will discuss use of state-of-the-art, noninvasive examination techniques to learn from the material and physical aspects of collections. 11 a.m., [register](mailto:ampar@loc.gov). Contact: [ampar@loc.gov](mailto:ampar@loc.gov).

## 26 TUESDAY

**Webinar:** “Preserving Daguerreotypes” will focus on the development of the daguerreotype and introduce the work of early photographer Robert Cornelius. 11 a.m., [register](mailto:register). Contact: [ampar@loc.gov](mailto:ampar@loc.gov).

## 27 WEDNESDAY

**Webinar:** “Preservation Digitization Program Overview” will introduce the variety of preservation reformatting techniques the Preservation Services Division performs. 11 a.m., [register](mailto:register). Contact: [ampar@loc.gov](mailto:ampar@loc.gov).

## 28 THURSDAY

**Webinar:** “Moving Collections to an Off-Site Facility” will provide a top-level overview of issues to keep in mind when libraries need to move collections off-site. 11 a.m., [register](mailto:register). Contact: [ampar@loc.gov](mailto:ampar@loc.gov).

**Webinar:** “Toward a More Perfect Union: The Constitution in Times of Change” will explore moments of constitutional change in the U.S., especially in more recent years. 2 p.m., [register](mailto:register). Contact: [lawoutreach@loc.gov](mailto:lawoutreach@loc.gov).

**Webinar:** In “Mary Lou Williams: Jazz, Race, Gender and Iconography,” musicology professor Gayle Murchison will share her research on the legendary American jazz pianist, composer and arranger. Noon, [stream](mailto:stream). Contact: 7-5502.

**Poetry Event:** An evening of performances and poetry readings will mark the conclusion of U.S. poet laureate Joy Harjo’s laureateship. 7 p.m., Coolidge Auditorium. Contact: 7-8000.

rium. Contact: 7-8000.

## 29 FRIDAY

**Webinar:** Jacob Nadal, the Library’s director for preservation, will describe how the Preservation Directorate plans for and maintains its programs. 11 a.m., [register](mailto:register). Contact: [ampar@loc.gov](mailto:ampar@loc.gov).

**Dance Party:** U.S. poet laureate Joy Harjo will host a dance party to celebrate the end of her laureateship. 7 p.m., Montpelier Room. [Get free tickets](mailto:free tickets). Contact: [dearn@loc.gov](mailto:dearn@loc.gov).

**Concert:** Grammy-winning pianist, composer and arranger Pablo Ziegler will perform with his jazz tango trio. 8 p.m., Coolidge Auditorium. [Get free tickets](mailto:free tickets). Contact: [drivera@loc.gov](mailto:drivera@loc.gov).

Request ADA accommodations for events five business days in advance at 7-6362 or [ADA@loc.gov](mailto:ADA@loc.gov).

View the full calendar at [loc.gov/events](https://www.loc.gov/events)

### OPERATIONS RESTORATION, CONTINUED FROM 7

remained closed until this month – it opened on April 4 – because of Adams Building garage repairs.

Lynn Weinstein, a business research and reference specialist, served patrons the day the reading room reopened. “There were a lot of familiar faces that came back,” she said. “It was very welcoming.”

At the start of the pandemic, she teleworked full time. Now, on her new regular schedule, she will telework once a week.

“I did miss connecting with our physical collections, and I also missed accidental collaborations that occurred when I would informally talk with my colleagues,” Weinstein said of maximum telework.

But she appreciates her off-site workday now. “I like being able to achieve a better work-life balance by having those moments at

home when I can contemplate my next blog or go down a rabbit hole researching a LibGuide,” she said.

María Peña, a public affairs specialist, started working for the Communications Office in December 2020 while all its staff worked remotely. Her onboarding was virtual, and she didn’t meet any of her new colleagues until the office had a picnic outdoors in June 2021.

Before the start of regular operations last week, she came to the Library only occasionally to staff an in-person media interview or an on-site filming request. Now, she works in the office twice a week, on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

“I was able to see most of my colleagues last week, and I must say it was exciting to share office space and even some snacks,” she said. “It reminded me of grammar school, when we’d trade stories of our summer vacays or show off a new pair of sneakers.”

Other major milestones on the road to normality included the reopening of public exhibitions on July 15, 2021, and the hosting of a book festival event in the Coolidge Auditorium on Sept. 21, the first public event in more than a year and a half.

As operations restoration slowly unfolded, Macías said he enjoyed seeing more colleagues on-site. Now, he plans to take advantage of additional eating options: “Those Subway lines get really long!”

Until March, when the sixth-floor Madison Building cafe reopened, Subway was one of just a handful of on-site food service offerings.

Given everything, Macías views the future with hope: “We learned a lot about ourselves and one another,” he said of the pandemic. “I like to think that a great deal of the transformation we experienced made us kinder, more grateful, more human.” ■